

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STOCKH 02273 271603Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 CAB-02
COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPG-02 FAA-00 MCT-01 SY-05
/069 W

-----271610Z 084031 /43

O 271446Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 706
INFO USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
USUN NEW YORK 1027
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STOCKHOLM 2273

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PFOR, SW, UR
SUBJECT: HIJACKING OF SOVIET PLANE TO SWEDEN

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: FACTS ON SUCCESSFUL HIJACKING OF SOVIET
DOMESTIC FLIGHT TO STOCKHOLM MAY 26, AS EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THEM,
ARE AS FOLLOWS: THE PILOT OF AN AEROFLOT MOSCOW TO LONDON FLIGHT
ADVISED SWEDISH AUTHORITIES AT ARLANDA AIRPORT IN STOCKHOLM
AT 1620 MAY 26 THAT A SOVIET CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT ON DOMESTIC FLIGHT
FROM DVINSK TO RIGA HAD BEEN HIJACKED AND WAS HEADED FOR SWEDEN.
WHETHER THIS ANNOUNCEMENT OR SWEDISH RADAR FIRST ALERTED SWEDISH
AUTHORITIES TO THE SOVIET PLANE'S APPROACH IS UNCLEAR. IN ANY
CASE, TWO SWEDISH AIR FORCE DRAGON INTERCEPTORS MET THE HIJACKED
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AIRCRAFT NORTH OF GOTLAND AND ESCORTED IT INTO ARLANDA, ARRIVING
AT APPROXIMATELY 1700 HOURS. MEANWHILE, SWEDISH ANTI-TERRORIST
MECHANISMS WERE TRIGGERED AND THE PLANE WAS IMMEDIATELY SEALED
OFF BY SWEDISH POLICE IN REMOTE CORNER OF AIRFIELD. FIRST
PASSENGER TO EMERGE WAS THE LONE HIJACKER, IDENTIFIED ONLY AS A
37-YEAR OLD WHITE RUSSIAN, WHO WAS UNARMED AND INDICATED HE
WISHES TO TURN HIMSELF OVER TO SWEDISH AUTHORITIES. EIGHTEEN

OTHER PASSENGERS AND CREW OF FOUR LEFT THE PLANE AND POLICE CONDUCTED A THOROUGH SEARCH. THE HIJACKER, WHOSE NAME HAS STILL NOT BEEN RELEASED, REPORTEDLY EVEN TO INSISTENT SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS, REMAINS IN POLICE CUSTODY. AT ABOUT 1230 STOCKHOLM TIME MAY 27, THE SOVIET PLANE AND PASSENGERS RETURNED TO THE USSR. ACCORDING TO REPORTS MAY 27, THE HIJACKER HAS REQUESTED POLITICAL ASYLUM.

2. SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS INSISTED IMMEDIATELY THAT THE HIJACKER WAS A TERRORIST AND BANDIT AND DEMANDED HIS EXTRADITION. SOVIET AMBASSADOR JAKOVLEV CALLED ON MFA DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS AT 1730 MAY 26, NOTED THAT SWEDEN IS SIGNATORY TO THE HAGUE CONVENTION ON HIJACKING, AND MADE THREE PVNTS ON INSTRUCTION FROM MOSCOW: (1) GOS MUST GUARANTEE SECURITY OF AIRCRAFT AND PASSENGERS; (2) THE SOVIET CITIZENS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THE USSR; AND (3) THE CRIMINAL OR CRIMINALS SHOULD BE EXTRADITED TO THE USSR.

3. LEIFLAND TOLD REPORTERS HE REPLIED THAT SWEDEN WILL DO ALL POSSIBLE BY WAY OF PROTECTING SOVIET CITIZENS, THAT THEY ARE QUITE FREE TO RETURN TO THE SOVIET UNION "AS SOON AS THEY WANT TO, IF THEY WANT TO," AND THAT ACCORDING TO THE HAGUE CONVENTION, THE GOS IS ENTITLED, SHOULD IT FIND THAT SOMEONE HAS HIJACKED AN AIRCRAFT, TO EITHER EXTRADITE THE PERSON OR PROSECUTE THE PERSON IN SWEDEN. (THERE IS NO BILATERAL EXTRADITION AGREEMENT BETWEEN SWEDEN AND THE USSR, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS.) LEIFLAND NOTED FOR REPORTERS THAT THE POLICE ARE PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR INVESTIGATING THE CASE, AND THAT A FORMAL REQUEST FOR EXTRADITION, IF MADE BY THE SOVIETS, WILL ENTAIL CONSIDERABLE FORMALITIES AND DOCUMENTATION. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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4. SWEDISH PRESS COMMENTARY ON THE AFFAIR THUS FAR TENDS TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE GOS WILL CONSENT TO EXTRADITION, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE HIJACKER RUNS THE RISK OF EXECUTION. SPECULATION IS THAT THE SOVIETS WILL EXERT CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON THE GOS, BUT THAT FOR POLITICAL REASONS THE GOS WILL INSIST ON PROSECUTING THE INDIVIDUAL HERE AND, IF FOUND GUILTY SENTENCE HIM TO A SWEDISH JAIL. AS OF MIDDAY MAY 27, THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GOS POSITION, OTHER THAN LEIFLAND'S COMMENTS AND STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS SECRETARY THAT THE GOS IS AWAITING FURTHER INFORMATION AND THAT NO EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE GOVERNMENT IS CONTEMPLATED. END UNCLASSIFIED.

5. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE: COMMENT: DESPITE PRESS SPECULATION THAT THE HIJACKING INCIDENT COULD WELL CREATE A TICKLISH PROBLEM IN SWEDISH-SOVIET RELATIONS, EMBASSY SOURCES AT MFA SEEM GENUINELY RELAXED THAT GOS HAS HANDLED MATTER QUITE CORRECTLY AND IN ACCORDANCE

WITH SWEDISH AND INTERNATIONAL LAW. SOURCES ADDED
THAT IT IS QUITE CERTAIN HIJACKER WILL NOT BE RETURNED
TO SOVIET UNION WHICH, UNDER HAGUE CONVENTION, IS
SWEDISH OPTION. CASE IS NOW IN HANDS OF POLICE,
HIJACKER WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE TRIED IN SWEDISH COURT
AND, IF FOUND GUILTY, SENTENCED TO SWEDISH JAIL.
ONE MFA SOURCE SAID THAT HE DOUBTED VERY MUCH IF
GUILTY VERDICT WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY MAXIMUM
FOUR-YEAR JAIL SENTENCE. IT IS TRUE, OF COURSE, THAT
SOVIETS ARE UPSET AND PARTICULARLY WITH INABILITY OF
SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO GET FOREIGN MINISTER SODER'S
PERSONAL ATTENTION. THERE IS SPECULATION THAT
MOSCOW, TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR IMMEDIATE DISPLEASURE,
MAY CANCEL THE PLANNED VISIT OF SOVIET FISHERIES
MINISTER TO STOCKHOLM NEXT WEEK. NEVERTHELESS, OUR
IMPRESSION NOW IS THAT SWEDES ARE FEELING
RATHER RELAXED THAT THEY HAVE HANDLED SITUATION IN
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SATISFACTORY MANNER.
PERRY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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